

2024 FOOTBALL PREVIEW ISSUE

Aggieland

ILLUSTRATED

ALSO INSIDE

SEC MEDIA DAYS
COACH MICHAEL EARLEY
AND MORE...

THE NEW 12TH MAN

NANA BOADI-OWUSU



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BY ROB HAVENS '88

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ON THE COVER: Our new 12th Man, sophomore defensive lineman Nana Boadi-Owusu, goes through drills during fall camp. Photo by Rob Havens '88



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Howdy Ags!

It's almost game time and we are excited to watch the first season in the Mike Elko era. This is always one of our favorite issues to put together as we do our homework on the opponents the team will face this fall. Coach Elko and staff have worked hard since the Texas Bowl to recruit, develop and field a team that can compete for a championship this season.

In the limited time we are given to watch the team prepare in fall camp, we can confirm that this team is bigger, faster and stronger since we saw them last. Conner Weigman is back to 100% and excited to lead the team under the direction of new offensive coordinator Collin Klein. When asked what he liked most about Klein's system Weigman responded, "Points!"

We are also super excited to see Elko's defense again, as the Aggies will play under their first defensive-minded head coach since R.C. Slocum. As someone who remembers the original Wrecking Crew, I can attest that the offense may sell tickets, but the defense wins championships. Nothing gives Kyle Field more of a home-team advantage than an amazing defense.

The team also voted and named a new 12th Man for this season. Coach Elko and staff came up with four nominees that were the best candidates and the team selected Nana Boadi-Owusu as the one who would represent the team and the school. Elko explained, "He fits the culture and the selfless service that this university wants in that jersey number."

In this issue, we also feature the Aggies' appearance at SEC Media Days. National reporters questioned the fact that the offseason in College Station was super quiet. Elko's response was, "That is a good thing." The team has become more disciplined and accountability is a real thing in Aggieland.

Also, inside we welcome new baseball head coach Mike Earley. It was a bit of a rollercoaster ride, but the Aggies got their guy and we are excited to see the program under a man who loves A&M and sees this as the best baseball job in America.

Thanks to our corporate partners and all of our readers as we begin the 19th year of publishing our magazine!

Gig'em!

Rob '88



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Aggieland Illustrated is an independently owned, Aggie owned and operated publication and in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published six times a year in the United States by Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

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Volume 19, Number 1

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SEC MEDIA DAYS

Texas A&M's head coach Mike Elko addresses the media on the big stage at SEC Media Days in Dallas, Texas. The four-day event brought coaches and players from all 16 members of the conference. Coach Elko, Shemar Turner, Taurean York, and Trey Zuhn III all did an amazing job representing Texas A&M. Photo by Rob Havens '88

OPPORTUNE



OPPORTUNE



OPPORTUNE



OPPORTUNE





SAW'EM OFF SHORT

A capacity crowd came to the Hall of Champions to welcome our new head baseball coach Mike Earley back to Aggieland. The coach and his family were all smiles as they joined President Welsh & Director of Athletics Trev Alberts to Saw Varsities Horns Off at the end of the celebration. Photo by Rob Havens '88





HE'S BACK

After suffering a season ending leg injury versus Auburn last season, Conner Weigman is back to 100% and ready to hit the field again. Under the direction of our new offensive coordinator Collin Klein, the Aggies are expecting big numbers from Weigman in his third season with the Aggies. Photo by Rob Havens '88

2024 FIGHTIN' TEXAS AGGIE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY ROB HAVENS '88



Well, the long and exciting Aggie baseball season helped bridge the gap as we waited for Aggie Football to get here. But it is finally here and we couldn't be more excited for the Mike Elko era to begin. At SEC Media Days reporters commented on the fact that things were pretty quiet here in Aggieland as we prepared for the upcoming season but Elko explained that programs that are quiet during April, May, and June "Is usually a good thing!"

The media predicted Texas A&M would finish ninth in the SEC which may be a great thing. Low expectations for a new coach who came here in December and took over a team that looked like a shell of itself in the bowl game. As Elko went to work to assemble a staff and retain an early signing class he didn't get a lot of time to get things rolling. His staff assembled one of the top transfer classes in the nation and then he finished up the recruiting class and went to work on the field for spring ball. The Aggies under the direction of Tommy Moffit and his strength and conditioning staff have been working all spring and summer to field a team that can compete this fall.

The Aggies have little time to wait, they start August 31st and

they play against Notre Dame. Elko has come in and changed the culture already. One of the biggest changes was installing discipline and accountability. So far the results have been great and the quiet spring is all the proof we needed. We saw what Elko could do at a basketball school like Duke, where there were less talented players. Now we look forward to see what he can do with SEC talented guys and the best facilities and alumni support in the country.

Due to injuries, last season the Aggies were forced to use four different quarterbacks to get through the season. The good news is we bring back three of those guys this season and they all have significant playing time.

Connor Weigman should be our starter again on day one. He has already shown lots of grit and determination to come back from his injury and Elko said he is back to 100%. Last year he started the first four games before suffering the season-ending injury against Auburn.

Jaylen Henderson was huge for us last year as he started the final four games and was responsible for eight of the team's 14 offensive

touchdowns in the last three weeks of the regular season. He also suffered an injury in the Texas Bowl that ended his season.

Marcel Reed came in to replace Henderson and completed 20-33 passes for 361 yards to give the Aggies a chance to win. Reed proved he was capable of leading the Aggies and provides great depth for Elko.

The Aggies also signed quarterback Miles O'Neill from Princeton New Jersey. He chose the Aggies over Michigan St, Penn St and Pittsburgh. He was the No. 20 quarterback nationally and the No. 5 player in the state.

Coach Adam Cushing came with Elko from Duke and is the offensive line coach and run game coordinator. Captain Trey Zuhn III will start at left tackle and was one of three players who accompanied Elko to SEC Media Days. Bryce Foster transferred out and Mark Nabou Jr. or Kolinu'u Faaiu will take his place at center. Chase Bisontis will play left guard and Ar'maj Reed Adams, who joins the team from Kansas, will play right guard. Dametrious Crownover or Reuben Fatheree II will play right tackle.

Senior transfer Tre Watson will start at tight end, and the Aggies welcome back Donovan Green who suffered a season-ending injury last year in fall camp. He played in ten games during his freshman season and started four of them. He earned the Aggie Offense Top Newcomer Award and we are excited to have him back. The Aggies also added Shane Calhoun from East Carolina during the spring.

The running back room is loaded

with talent as Le'Veon Moss returns as well as Amari Daniels. The Aggies also picked up Stanford transfer EJ Smith (the son of Emmit Smith).

Noah Thomas had another stellar spring at wide receiver and returns for his junior year after leading the squad with five touchdown receptions last year in eleven games. Jahdae Walker and Moose Muhammad III are the other two likely starters who will be called on to fill the shoes of Ainius Smith who was drafted by the Eagles. The Aggies also picked up Jacob Bostick from Iowa and Cyrus Allen from Louisiana Tech.

The Aggie defense will be run by defensive coordinator Jay Bateman. The defensive line will once again be one of the strongest units as the Aggies return captain Shemar Turner who has added 30 pounds since last season and will move inside to defensive tackle. Turner started all 12 games last year and was third on the team in tackles.

Albert Regis will anchor the middle of the line at nose tackle. He played in 12 games last season and is ready for a standout junior season. The most exciting acquisition of the spring was Purdue transfer and Bryan, Texas native Nic Scourton who will terrorize offenses this fall. Elko also added Cashius Howell from Bowling Green. The Aggies have great depth as well in Shemar Stewart, DJ Hicks, Malick Sylla And Gabriel Brownlow-Dindy.

Running the show for the Aggie defense will be sophomore co-captain Taurean York at linebacker. The freshman All-American started all 13 games last year and was second on the team with 74 tackles. He earned the Defensive Skill Award

at the annual team banquet.

The Aggies picked up linebacker Solomon DeShields from Pitt and he will be playing his final collegiate year with the Aggies.

In the secondary, the Aggies needed to fill some holes and they were able to via the portal. Tyreek Chappell returns at corner as well as Dalton Brooks. The Aggies added Trey Jones III from Central Michigan and BJ Mayes from Incarnate Word.

The Aggies are pleased to welcome back Bryce Anderson at safety. He played in 11 games last year and was fourth on the team with tackles. In Elko's defense, we expect big things from Bryce.

On special teams, Randy Bond returns for his senior year. He made all 48 of his PAT attempts last year and made 29 field goals. Look for Tyler White to be our new punter. He played high school ball at Carroll High School where he averaged 42.3 yards as a junior. Jacob Graham will once again handle the deep snapping duties. Terry Bussey and Moose Muhammad III will share duties as punt returners and Le'Veon Moss and Terry Bussey will return kickoffs.

The key to a successful season will be keeping our players healthy. With Moffitt getting their bodies ready and Elko and his staff developing them and making the play calls I'm confident we can have a successful year. We all got to see what a difference an Elko defense can make and I hope we will see that this fall in his first year. Regardless of what our record is, it's already evident what he has been able to do since he's been here in developing great men that make us proud to call Aggies. Let's BTHO everybody especially tu! ■

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. NOTRE DAME	OCT. 19	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
SEP. 7	VS. MCNEESE STATE	OCT. 26	VS. LSU
SEP. 14	@ FLORIDA	NOV. 2	@ SOUTH CAROLINA
SEP. 21	VS. BOWLING GREEN	NOV. 16	VS. NEW MEXICO STATE
SEP. 28	VS. ARKANSAS	NOV. 23	@ AUBURN
OCT. 5	VS. MISSOURI	NOV. 30	VS. TEXAS

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	7 - 6
CONFERENCE	4 - 4
HOME	6 - 1
AWAY	0 - 4
NEUTRAL	1 - 1

01

NOTRE DAME



The Mike Elko Era will begin at Kyle Field versus one of the most historic programs in the country, the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. It's the first time the Maroon & White have faced the Golden Domers since September of 2001, when the Aggies beat the Irish in Aggieland 24-3. Elko will face off against a familiar face, as Duke transfer Riley Leonard will be under center for Notre Dame. Leonard played three seasons under the tutelage of Elko and threw for over 4,000 yards. The 6'4 216 pound senior also rushed for over 1,200 yards in his career before suffering an ankle injury that sidelined him for most of last year. The Irish went 10-3 last season and expectations are high for them to make it into the new 12-team playoff of the CFP. Defensive Coordinator Al Golden has propelled the Irish defense from 43rd in the nation to number five in just two short seasons. The Aggies, under new offensive coordinator Collin Klein, will have to find a way to run the ball against the Irish if they hope to win. The 12th Man is anxious to watch Coach Elko's defense hit the field.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	@ TEXAS A&M	OCT. 19	VS. GEORGIA TECH
SEP. 7	VS. N ILLINOIS	OCT. 26	VS. NAVY
SEP. 14	@ PURDUE	NOV. 9	VS. FLORIDA STATE
SEP. 21	VS. MIAMI (OH)	NOV. 16	VS. VIRGINIA
SEP. 28	VS. LOUISVILLE	NOV. 23	VS. ARMY WEST POINT
OCT. 12	VS. STANFORD	NOV. 30	@ USC



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOTRE DAME ATHLETICS

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	10 - 3
CONFERENCE	N/A
HOME	5 - 1
AWAY	3 - 2
NEUTRAL	2 - 0

02

MCNEESE



In week two of the season, the Ags will take on the McNeese State Cowboys and with an 11:45 a.m. start time. We are confident to predict this game will be hot! McNeese had a tough year in 2023 going 0-10, but the Aggies know better than to take a team for granted and will be fired up to beat the Cowboys. The Cowboy defense is led by preseason first-team All-American Micah Davey, who hails from Baton Rouge and was All-Southland Conference 1st Team last season. He enters 2024 with 221 career tackles and is the anchor of the defense from the linebacker position. Head Coach Gary Goff will rely on Preseason All-SLC defensive back Levi Wyatt to lead things in the secondary. Goff says they are two to three deep at the wide receiver position, two deep on the offensive line, and three deep on the defensive line, which makes him hopeful for a bounce-back year.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 24	@ TARLETON STATE	OCT. 5	@ HOUSTON CHRISTIAN
AUG. 31	VS. SOUTHERN	OCT. 19	VS. INCARNATE WORD
SEP. 7	@ TEXAS A&M	OCT. 26	@ NICHOLLS
SEP. 14	VS. STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	NOV. 2	VS. TAMU-COMMERCE
SEP. 21	VS. ALCORN	NOV. 16	@ NORTHWESTERN ST
SEP. 28	@ WEBER STATE	NOV. 23	VS. LAMAR

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	1 - 10
CONFERENCE	1 - 6
HOME	1 - 4
AWAY	0 - 6
NEUTRAL	0 - 0



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCNEESE STATE ATHLETICS

03

FLORIDA



The Aggies' first road trip of the season is to Gainesville, Florida, where we take on the Gators. Coach Billy Napier and staff have what most experts have called the toughest schedule in the country. Florida will face Georgia, Texas, Ole Miss, LSU, Florida St., Tennessee, Miami and Texas A&M. That's the bad news. The good news is that quarterback Graham Mertz returned to lead the Gators once again. The Wisconsin transfer completed just under 73% of his passes last year which was tops in the SEC and good for No. 3 in the nation. The Gators finished 5-7 last year and most experts believe Napier is on the hot seat and may not make it to the end of the season. If the Gators hope to turn things around they will need big seasons from returning running back Montrell Johnson and wide receiver Eugene Wilson. The Gators had some close losses last year and The Swamp is no easy place to play. The Aggies will have to bring their A-game to get their first road win.



2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. MIAMI	OCT. 19	VS. KENTUCKY
SEP. 7	VS. SAMFORD	NOV. 2	VS. GEORGIA
SEP. 14	VS. TEXAS A&M	NOV. 9	@ TEXAS
SEP. 21	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE	NOV. 16	VS. LSU
OCT. 5	VS. UCF	NOV. 23	VS. OLE MISS
OCT. 12	@ TENNESSEE	NOV. 30	@ FLORIDA STATE

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 5
HOME	4 - 2
AWAY	1 - 4
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLORIDA ATHLETICS

04

BOWLING GREEN



The Aggies will return home in week four to face the Bowling Green Falcons. BGSU is no stranger to big games in hostile environments. as they played the eventual national champions, last season in Ann Arbor. The Falcons return sixth-year quarterback Connor Bazelak, who returns for his second season at Bowling Green after stops at Missouri and Indiana. In the backfield, Bowling Green will have last year's leading rusher Terion Stewart, who averaged 6.1 yards per carry. Bazelak's top target in the receiving corps is tight end Harold Fannin Jr., who had 44 catches for 623 yards and six touchdowns last year. On defense, the Falcons led the nation in turnovers last season and finished fourth in the MAC in yards allowed per game. All three defensive linemen return from last year's squad, including Dontrez Brown, who led the group in tackles. Joseph Sipp Jr. anchors the defense from his linebacker spot, where he was second on the team in tackles. The Ags have more talent but will need to stay focused against this scrappy team.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 29	VS. FORDHAM	OCT. 19	VS. KENT STATE
SEP. 7	@ PENN STATE	OCT. 26	@ TOLEDO
SEP. 21	@ TEXAS A&M	NOV. 5	@ CENTRAL MICHIGAN
SEP. 28	VS. OLD DOMINION	NOV. 12	VS. W MICHIGAN
OCT. 5	@ AKRON	NOV. 23	@ BALL STATE
OCT. 12	VS. N ILLINOIS	NOV. 29	VS. MIAMI (OH)

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	7 - 6
CONFERENCE	5 - 3
HOME	3 - 2
AWAY	4 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF BGSU ATHLETICS



05 ARKANSAS



This will be the final installment of the Southwest Classic at Jerry World. Although the games are always competitive matchups, the Aggies have dominated the Hogs in the win column, securing victories in 11 of the last 12 meetings. Last year the Aggies won 34-22, and they are ready to wrap up the classic with one more win. Fortunately for the Aggies, we won't have to chase after KJ Jefferson anymore, as the 6'3 247-pound QB transferred to UCF. Head Coach Sam Pittman will look to Boise State transfer Taylen Green to fill the shoes of Jefferson, and a familiar play-caller will be in the booth as Bobby Petrino takes over as the new offensive coordinator. The Razorbacks went 4-8 last season, and as lovable as Pittman is, he has to turn things around this season or he will likely get the boot. The Arkansas defense was the bright spot last year, with the defensive line compiling 41 tackles – good for second in the SEC. With future scheduling still up in the air, this could be our last time to play the Hogs for a while. Let's make it count.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 29	VS. UAPB	OCT. 19	VS. LSU
SEP. 7	@ OKLAHOMA STATE	OCT. 26	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
SEP. 14	VS. UAB	NOV. 2	VS. OLE MISS
SEP. 21	@ AUBURN	NOV. 16	VS. TEXAS
SEP. 28	VS. TEXAS A&M	NOV. 23	VS. LOUISIANA TECH
OCT. 5	VS. TENNESSEE	NOV. 30	@ MISSOURI



2023 RECORD

OVERALL	4 - 8
CONFERENCE	1 - 7
HOME	3 - 4
AWAY	1 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

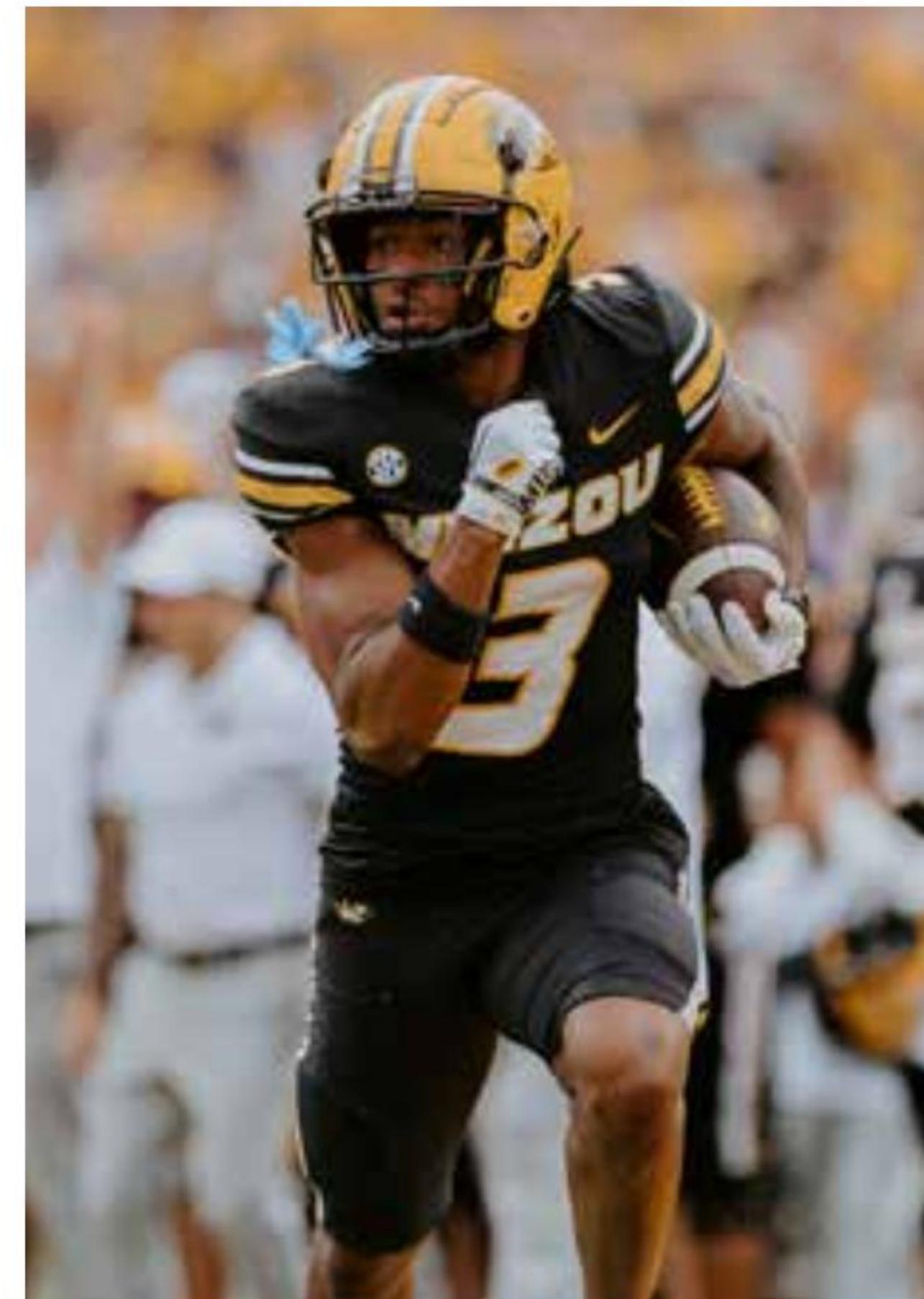
06 MISSOURI



It has been three years since the Aggies have faced the Missouri Tigers. Last year, the Tigers went 11-2 and finished off their campaign with a Cotton Bowl win over Ohio State. Expectations are high again in Columbia as fans expect their team to make it into the CFP 12 team field. Head Coach Eli Drinkwitz has slowly put together a talented squad that finished second in the East last year. Senior Brady Cook returns at quarterback after a successful season last year where he broke the SEC record for consecutive pass completions without giving up an interception (365). Missouri will have to replace Cody Schrader, who was the SEC's best running back last season. They went out and got two proven running backs from the portal in Marcus Carroll from Georgia State and Nate Noel from Appalachian State. Wide receiver Luther Burden III returns for his junior campaign after a stellar sophomore year that showed he is one of the best in the country. The Tigers also return a stingy defense that will test us. The Aggies will have their hands full in game six.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 29	VS. MURRAY STATE	OCT. 19	VS. AUBURN
SEP. 7	VS. BUFFALO	OCT. 26	@ ALABAMA
SEP. 14	VS. BOSTON COLLEGE	NOV. 9	VS. OKLAHOMA
SEP. 21	VS. VANDERBILT	NOV. 16	@ SOUTH CAROLINA
OCT. 5	@ TEXAS A&M	NOV. 23	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
OCT. 12	@ UMASS	NOV. 30	VS. ARKANSAS



2023 RECORD

OVERALL	11 - 2
CONFERENCE	6 - 2
HOME	6 - 1
AWAY	3 - 1
NEUTRAL	2 - 0

07

MISSISSIPPI STATE



The Bulldogs should look much different this year under the direction of new head coach Jeff Lebby. He arrives in Starkville after a successful run at Oklahoma as their offensive coordinator. He brings an up-tempo spread offense that had plenty of success in the Big 12, but now he will have to see how that transitions to the SEC. The folks at SEC Media Days didn't have much faith in this year's team and predicted a 15th-place finish for the Dogs. Lebby lost six offensive linemen from last year's team, so he had to use the portal to fill some holes. At wide receiver, Mississippi State has some talented guys, beginning with former UTEP wideout Kelly Akharaiyi and Kevin Coleman from Louisville. Former Baylor quarterback Blake Shapen is expected to be the starter after four years with the Bears. He threw for almost 6,000 yards in three years and was the MVP at the 2021 Big 12 Championship. Coleman Hutzler joins Lebby as the new defensive coordinator after spending the last two seasons at Bama. The Aggies need to take care of business here.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. E KENTUCKY	OCT. 19	VS. TEXAS A&M
SEP. 7	@ ARIZONA STATE	OCT. 26	VS. ARKANSAS
SEP. 14	VS. TOLEDO	NOV. 2	VS. UMASS
SEP. 21	VS. FLORIDA	NOV. 9	@ TENNESSEE
SEP. 28	@ TEXAS	NOV. 23	VS. MISSOURI
OCT. 12	@ GEORGIA	NOV. 29	@ OLE MISS

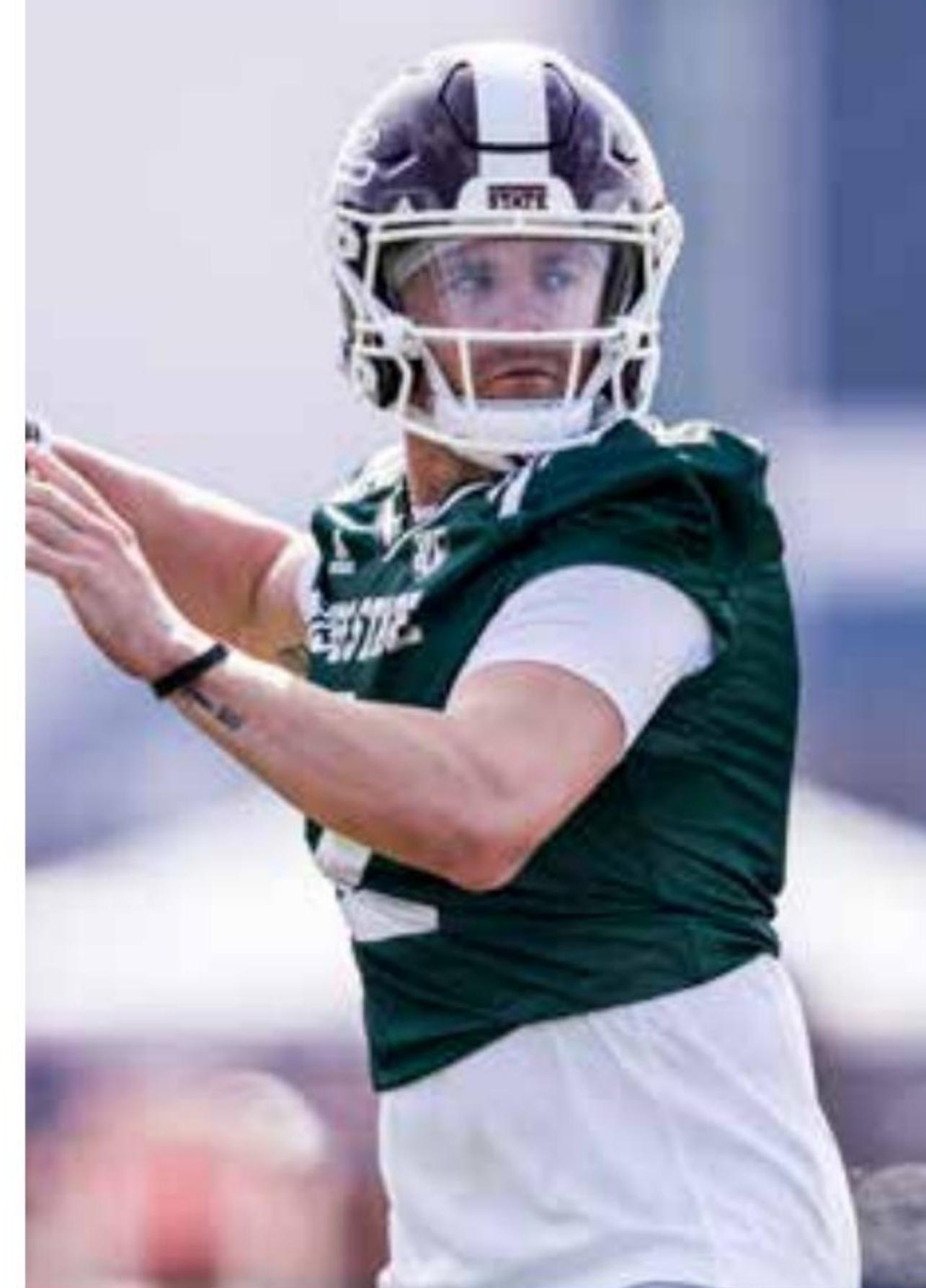


PHOTO COURTESY OF MISSISSIPPI STATE ATHLETICS

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 7
CONFERENCE	1 - 7
HOME	4 - 4
AWAY	1 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

08 LSU



The Aggies will face LSU in October this year as the Tigers come to Kyle Field for the first time in the Elko era. In Coach Kelly's third season in Baton Rouge, he will have a new starting QB after Heisman Trophy winner Jayden Daniels left for the NFL. Garrett Nussmeier is more of a pocket passer than the elusive Daniels was, but he showed off his skills in their bowl game last season, where he threw for 395 yards and led the team on a game-winning drive to beat Wisconsin. Look for running back Kaleb Jackson to lead the Tigers in the backfield. Coach Kelly knew that if this team was going to compete for championships they had to get better on defense, so he fired DC Matt House and replaced him with Missouri's Blake Baker. The centerpiece of the Tigers D is Harold Perkins Jr. who has put on some more weight in order to take over the middle of the Tiger defense. The secondary will be led by Major Burns, who had 93 tackles last season. A win over the Tigers would definitely give the Ags a boost in their resume for a spot in the CFP.

2024 SCHEDULE

SEP. 1	VS. USC	OCT. 19	@ ARKANSAS
SEP. 7	VS. NICHOLLS	OCT. 26	@ TEXAS A&M
SEP. 14	@ SOUTH CAROLINA	NOV. 9	@ ALABAMA
SEP. 21	VS. UCLA	NOV. 16	@ FLORIDA
SEP. 28	VS. SOUTH ALABAMA	NOV. 23	VS. VANDERBILT
OCT. 12	VS. OLE MISS	NOV. 30	VS. OKLAHOMA

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	10 - 3
CONFERENCE	6 - 2
HOME	7 - 0
AWAY	2 - 2
NEUTRAL	1 - 1



PHOTO COURTESY OF LSU ATHLETICS

09

SOUTH CAROLINA



Even when the SEC decides to shake up the schedules we always get to play South Carolina. After 2 great seasons under Shane Beamer, the Gamecocks struggled to a 5-7 record last year, and the natives are getting a little restless in Columbia. Rattler is gone and redshirt freshman LaNorris Sellers is their new quarterback. The Cocks struggled to run the ball last season averaging only 85 yards per game, which is a big reason why Rattler threw for over 3,000 yards. Can Beamer get Sellers up to speed quickly enough to spark the offense or will they need to get their run-game going to win? On defense, linebacker Debo Williams is the centerpiece of Clayton White's squad. The Gamecocks are also excited about 5-star recruit Dylan Stewart, who is an edge rusher on the defensive line. Beamer does have some talent in the secondary, led by Nick Emmanwori, DQ Smith and Jalon Kilgore. The Aggies need this road win a week before the bye to sustain momentum for the home stretch.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. OLD DOMINION	OCT. 19	@ OKLAHOMA
SEP. 7	@ KENTUCKY	NOV. 2	VS. TEXAS A&M
SEP. 14	VS. LSU	NOV. 9	@ VANDERBILT
SEP. 21	VS. AKRON	NOV. 16	VS. MISSOURI
OCT. 5	VS. OLE MISS	NOV. 23	VS. WOFFORD
OCT. 12	@ ALABAMA	NOV. 30	@ CLEMSON

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 5
HOME	5 - 2
AWAY	0 - 4
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH CAROLINA ATHLETICS



10

NEW MEXICO ST.



This Aggies vs. Aggies game comes just in time for the good guys to get ready for a college playoff run. New Mexico State has a new head coach in Tony Sanchez, who took over the program in January. State is trying to earn a trip to a bowl game for the third year in a row, a feat they have never accomplished. Sanchez said there's a new standard in Las Cruces. "We don't want to win anymore; we expect to win." Unfortunately, they will be attempting to do that with a new QB, as their top three quarterbacks from last season transferred out. NMS will rely heavily on returning running back Monte Watkins, who rushed for 572 yards last season. State will also have a new play caller on the defensive side in Joe Morris, who joined the team from Sam Houston. He takes over a defense that was ranked as the No. 1 scoring defense in Conference USA last year. Unfortunately, they lost their three leading tacklers from last season. Texas A&M has more talent and hopefully will prove that in Week 10 so our starters can rest and give the new guys some reps.

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. SE MISSOURI	OCT. 15	VS. LOUISIANA TECH
SEP. 7	VS. LIBERTY	OCT. 29	@ FIU
SEP. 14	@ FRESNO STATE	NOV. 9	VS. W KENTUCKY
SEP. 21	@ SAM HOUSTON	NOV. 16	@ TEXAS A&M
SEP. 28	VS. NEW MEXICO	NOV. 23	@ MIDDLE TENNESSEE
OCT. 9	@ JACKSONVILLE STATE	NOV. 30	VS. UTEP

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	10 - 5
CONFERENCE	7 - 1
HOME	5 - 1
AWAY	5 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW MEXICO STATE ATHLETICS



11

AUBURN



Since Texas A&M joined the SEC, the visiting team has had a lot of success in this series, and we hope that continues this fall when the Ags travel to Auburn. The Tigers are entering their second year under Hugh Freeze. Last season, when the Aggies beat them 27-10 with backup Max Johnson after Connor Weigman suffered his season ending injury, Freeze said they were looking for answers. The Tigers return their starting QB Payton Thorne, Sr., who threw for 1,755 yards and 16 touchdowns. In the backfield the Tigers live and die by how Jarquez Hunter plays. If you can stop him, you have a good chance to win. Thorne has a talented set of receivers to throw to, including Penn State transfer KeAndre Lambert-Smith. On defense, Freeze had some holes to fill after spring ball, but Jalen McLeod returns after posting 48 tackles last year with 5.5 sacks at linebacker. The media ranked the Tigers No.10 in the SEC right behind A&M at No. 9, so expect this game to be a tight one.



2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. ALABAMA A&M	OCT. 19	@ MISSOURI
SEP. 7	VS. CALIFORNIA	OCT. 26	@ KENTUCKY
SEP. 14	VS. NEW MEXICO	NOV. 2	VS. VANDERBILT
SEP. 21	VS. ARKANSAS	NOV. 16	VS. ULM
SEP. 28	VS. OKLAHOMA	NOV. 23	VS. TEXAS A&M
OCT. 5	@ GEORGIA	NOV. 30	@ ALABAMA

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	6 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 5
HOME	3 - 4
AWAY	3 - 2
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUBURN ATHLETICS

12

TEXAS



Finally, the wait is over! The two powerhouses in the state will once again meet on the gridiron. The eyes of the nation will be on Kyle Field on November 30 when the two arch-rivals battle it out! This is a must-win for Coach Elko and his staff. Although the Horns lost a ton of talent from the team that squeaked into the CFP last year, experts are still expecting big things from Texas as they play in their first season in the SEC. Coach Steve Sarkisian knows what it means to play in the SEC, but his players do not. Quinn Ewers will get the start at the beginning of the season, but plenty of analysts believe by the time we play them in game 12 Arch Manning could be the starter. Texas will look to Jaydon Blue in the backfield for Sark's rushing attack. They added some receivers through the portal, including Isaiah Bond from Alabama and Matthew Golden from Houston. On the defensive line the Horns had to replace T'Vondre Sweat and Byron Murphy II, arguably the best defensive duo in college football last year. Mark your calendars, this one will be fun!



2024 SCHEDULE

AUG. 31	VS. COLORADO STATE	OCT. 19	VS. GEORGIA
SEP. 7	@ MICHIGAN	OCT. 26	@ VANDERBILT
SEP. 14	VS. UTSA	NOV. 9	VS. FLORIDA
SEP. 21	VS. ULM	NOV. 16	@ ARKANSAS
SEP. 28	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE	NOV. 23	VS. KENTUCKY
OCT. 12	VS. OKLAHOMA	NOV. 30	@ TEXAS A&M

2023 RECORD

OVERALL	12 - 2
CONFERENCE	8 - 1
HOME	6 - 0
AWAY	5 - 0
NEUTRAL	1 - 2

PHOTO COURTESY OF TEXAS ATHLETICS



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AGGIES TURN LEMONS INTO LEMONADE WITH EARLEY HIRE

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Having covered Aggie sports for close to two decades and a former student for almost four, I can definitely confirm that Battered Aggie Syndrome (BAS) is a real thing. So when the baseball team came up just two runs short of winning the national championship, it wasn't surprising that plenty of Aggies would experience the all too familiar symptoms that come with the disease; heartache, disappointment, and despair. But the day after the final game we experienced something that I have never felt since becoming an Aggie in 1984, betrayal.

On Tuesday afternoon following the national championship game, I received a text from a die-hard Texas Tech fan that said "What's the inside scoop on JS leaving for UT?" I immediately blew it off as a joke until I went on Twitter and saw multiple reports and then confirmed with a buddy from A&M that in fact Jim Schlossnagle was leaving to go and coach at tu.

It was unbelievable to me! Sure I had heard that they wanted him, but there was no way he would leave after just three years to go coach for our arch enemy. Especially just one day after playing for a national championship. There must be a mistake. It was such a gut punch!

As the hours went by the news got even worse. He was taking the whole coaching staff and probably most of our best players. Then I heard that the wheels had been in motion for two months. I was literally sick to my

stomach. Before our players could even unpack their bags a press conference had been scheduled in Austin to welcome Schloss and his staff to the University of Texas.

On Monday night after the game Schloss had been asked by a fellow beat writer at TexAgs if he could comment about the rumors of him leaving to go to another school. Jim ripped the guy for asking and denied the charges, claiming Texas A&M was a career ending destination for him. That he had left his family to come here, blah, blah, blah.

As the national media caught wind of the story of him leaving and how he had denied it the night before everyone had a negative spin on how he had handled it. As more information came out and people shared how they had been lied to, it got even more messy. It reminded me of a quote that I've heard over the years it takes a long time to build a great reputation but only one event to ruin it.

As I watched the welcome presser the next day I was nauseous to see our former coaching staff decked out in burnt orange. But I did notice one thing. Coach Earley looked as nauseous as me!

The cover story that Schloss and his former buddy from TCU and now the current AD from Texas came up with was that Chris Del Conte had waited at a Snook cemetery for Jim to return from Omaha and then went

and met with him and he decided to take the job. He even posted a picture of the car at the cemetery. Unfortunately Aggies are not storm troopers and their Jedi Mind Tricks don't work on us.

Earley would admit later that he and family were blindsided with the news the night of the final game and his decision to go to Austin was all about taking care of his family. Kirk Bohls of the Austin American-Statesman tweeted "Texas just stole A&M's soul."

But as in all great stories, this one has a happy ending! Let's start by correcting Mr. Bohls, Texas A&M is about more than just one coach and our souls are very much still intact. In fact, what is a great story without a great villain. Yes it's true that Schloss and his staff had great success in the three years they were here, but A&M is not a job it's a family and some people just don't get it.

As we look back, it's pretty obvious that Schlossnagle was very determined to put his thumbprint on this program. With Schlossnagle field in his sights! It's pretty apparent that promises were made and broken when it came to Bluebell Park. And although we were moving in that direction new AD Trev Alberts has made it crystal clear from the moment that he arrived on campus that the athletic program was going to be more fiscally responsible. And even though the Regents had approved \$80 million in renovations that doesn't mean they have \$80 million to spend right now. I feel pretty confident that Schloss saw the writing on the wall and wasn't going to hang around and wait for that first nail to be hammered on the renovation.

Can we take a moment to say that the current Blue Bell Park is one of the best college baseball parks in the nation and except for a couple of games a year has plenty of seating capacity to accommodate the crowd. In my personal opinion it was more about Schloss than it was about A&M.

Aggie Baseball has a long history of traditions and from the moment he got here Schloss wanted to put his stamp on this team and on the facility. Here are some of the examples. When they renovated the park 2012 they put in a long wall from the entry lounge to the dugout that had a photo collage of the history of Aggie baseball. It was really awesome even though only insiders got to see it. It's gone now! We use to sing "Happy Trails" as pitchers left the game from the opposing team, but that was nixed as well. The Riffleman jingle after strikeouts was in the cross hairs as well but die hards would not let him take that away. There was also plenty of controversy over the Aggie Dance Teams performing between innings on top of the dugouts. And doing the War Hymn before games was also axed but Section 203 wouldn't let it happen so now just the players don't get to do it before games. All of this may seem petty but looking back it was all about Schloss having it his way. And at a school where we preach it's not about us it's about A&M it's obvious he



didn't buy in.

After the dust settled it was time to turn the page and look for a new leader! The players had a meeting with Trev and President Welsh and they assured them that they would find the best coach to take over and that they welcomed their feedback. A national search took place but for the players there was only one choice and that was Mike Earley. Jace LaViolette led the campaign for Earley to return to A&M and all of the current players and former players that knew him all agreed.

Earley would thank the players later for opening the door and he ran through it. Earley would explain later that when he got here as an assistant he wasn't that excited but after being here for six months he understood that this place is different. In other words, He Gets It! In his mind LSU was always the pinnacle of college baseball and it was his dream to coach there one day but that all changed when he experienced Aggieland and Texas Aggie Baseball. This was his dream job and being the head coach here was his new goal. He figured that before that could happen he would probably have to leave and gain head coaching experience somewhere else but in the meantime he would develop a plan for success that when he got his shot he would be ready.

As the Twitterverse waited to hear who would be the next coach, the word got out that Earley had a homerun interview. Half of the team had entered the transfer portal as an insurance policy incase things didn't work out as planned. It was a scary time for fans as we saw

our head coach quit and half of the team looking for another landing spot.

When the decision was made to bring Earley back as our head coach it set off a celebration in Aggieland and around the nation amongst the 12th Man that were waiting to hear the news. A welcome celebration was announced and one by one the players in the portal announced that they were staying in College Station.

At the welcome celebration in the Hall of Champions a ruckus crowd arrived that was bigger than Jimbo's, Elko's and Schloss's. As bubbles blew and "Rattlin'Bog" echoed throughout the facility, fans cheered for the arrival of our new coach. He took the stage and told fans that he was ready for this and he was "Built for this!" He admitted that he had never been a head coach but that he had assembled a top-notch staff that had his back. And he said "But the one thing I know and I love Texas A&M!" "I promise you, I promise you I will do everything I can to take this baseball program to new heights!"

In the short time he has been here he has already made a huge difference. He brought back two of the top players in the portal in Jace LaViolette and Gavin Grahovac. Hayden Schott and Kaeden Kent also announced they were coming back along with several of our pitchers including Shane Sdao and Justin Lamkin.

At the initial presser Trev said he was pleasantly surprised at the first Zoom meeting he had with Earley, and really like his confidence and said he hit a homerun at their interview. The players absolutely had a say but he wanted to make the right hire and that's why he went through the process. He didn't want to take a step back with all of the momentum that this program has going on right now.

Earley bragged on the community here in Aggieland which he said is about 97% Aggies. "The little league parks and the elementary schools and the teachers and those kind of people I've met along the way. People I run into at the gym, that's what's made it so special for us. My neighbors, the Reed family I love them to death I'm so glad I get to live beside them. Those are the things that have really made me want to be here. I've been preparing to be the head coach here for a long time it just happened a lot quicker than I thought it was going to."

For the 12th Man who tasted the bitterness of betrayal, The Earleys have turned this situation into the sweetness of lemonade on a hot summer's day! We are excited to watch Coach Earley and his new staff continue the momentum that this program has and bring home a national championship for a coach who loves Texas A&M! ■



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AGGIES ARRIVE AT SEC MEDIA DAYS

WITH CONFIDENCE

Mike Elko attended his first SEC Media Days and allowed the Aggie beat media to ask questions before he took the big stage along with the three players that came with him, which included offensive lineman Trey Zuhn III, defensive tackle Shemar Turner, and linebacker Taurean York.

MIKE ELKO

COACH ELKO, WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT WHAT YOU GUYS HAVE GOTTEN DONE THIS OFF-SEASON?

I'm probably most proud that it has been a really quiet off-season. I think we talked a lot about just going to work and improving and enhancing our program and I think we've been able to do that. I think when you are not hearing about programs in April, May, and June that's usually a good thing.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT ANYTHING SPECIFICALLY THAT YOU FELT GOOD ABOUT THE STRIDES YOU'VE MADE SINCE YOU TOOK OVER THE JOB AND GOING INTO AUGUST CAMP?

I just think the buy in to the way we want to do things. You know we talk a lot about better or worse if that really exists but its certainly different in the way we want to do things from a cultural standpoint and how we impact the game of football. I just think the buy-in we've gotten from the players from the program has been really good.

HOW DO THEY SHOW THAT BUY-IN?

Probably with energy, enthusiasm, hard work, attitude,

and the morale in and around the building. You guys have seen it when they go over to your place (TexAgs). I just think there's a real positive energy in and around our building right now and that just kind of shows you that they are in with what you are trying to do.

THE FUTURE OF SCHEDULES IS STILL YET TO BE DETERMINED BUT DO YOU THINK TEXAS SHOULD PLAY TEXAS A&M EVERY YEAR? SHOULD THAT BE PART OF THE DEAL?

Oh yeah, I wouldn't see why we wouldn't. Certainly, when you talk about two programs like that in the same state, you'd certainly anticipate that it would be a priority game on the schedule as you move forward.

THE GAME BETWEEN THE TWO SCHOOLS HASN'T BEEN PLAYED IN 12 YEARS SO OBVIOUSLY NONE OF YOUR PLAYERS HAVE PLAYED IN IT, DO YOU GET A SENSE OF HOW MUCH THAT GAME MATTERS TO THEM, THE RIVALRY ITSELF BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T PLAYED IN IT?

Yeah so obviously this is a huge talking point for you guys. Our focus is on today, not on Thanksgiving weekend right now. And long before Thanksgiving weekend, we are going to focus on Notre Dame. But I think its only natural that when two schools are so close, and there are so many connections with players

on rosters. Certainly, a lot of their players and our players have played together, grew up together, that always enhances rivalry right? And so it's certainly not lost on anyone what that game means to Texas A&M and what it means to Texas and so that's there for sure.

DOES IT MAKE THAT FOCUS A LITTLE EASIER IN THE OFF-SEASON WHEN IT IS NOTRE DAME AS OPPOSE TO AN FCS-TYPE SCHOOL?

Yeah, I think it goes both ways. As a coach sometimes you'd maybe like a game that you'd have a larger margin in the opener sometimes but there's also the ability to really reconnect your players. You know you have the dog days of fall camp and it doesn't take a lot to grab their attention back when there is a huge magnitude on the opener. I think it can go both ways but obviously, it's really easy to understand the importance of being ready to play fast coming out of the gate when you have that game to start.

IT'S PRETTY RARE TO BRING A SOPHOMORE TO MEDIA DAYS WHAT IS IT ABOUT TAUREAN THAT STANDS OUT THAT HE CAN TAKE ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY?

I think it was important for us to bring our captains. I think the new program and the first year doing this I think leadership is something we really spoke an awful lot about, culture we've spoken a lot about. So to me, it was important that we brought our captains because those were the two guys that were voted on by our program to represent us. So bringing them here to media day, certainly for our first one just made a lot of sense. And then we've talked about what a tremendous kid Taurean is. He's extremely well-spoken, and he's a high-character kid. He's got the respect of everyone in that locker room. He represents everything we want Texas A&M to stand for.

WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE OFFENSIVE LINE AFTER BRINGING IN COACH CUSHING THAT GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE THAT WE WON'T SEE A REPEAT PERFORMANCE FROM THAT GROUP THAT WE SAW LAST YEAR OR THE SEASON BEFORE THAT?

I just think that kids have pride, right? And it's not lost on them that maybe we haven't been what we wanted to be or what we are capable of so I think that you pull on those strings. I think they've all worked extremely hard, I think we've made big strides in the weight room. That was important. I think they are in better shape physically than they've been in at this point maybe in previous years a lot of them have spoken about that and a lot of that is health-related. I mean look at Trey Zuhn who is here with us he hasn't really had a healthy off-season since he's been here and so for him to have a truly healthy off-season from start to finish and really build into camp as opposed to having a lot of guys get to camp and still trying to get healthy I think that will play a big role.

HOW HAS CONNER'S HEALTH PROGRESSION BEEN THIS SUMMER? WHAT IS HE CAPABLE OF IF HE IS ABLE TO STAY HEALTHY THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF A SEASON?

Yeah, I think we are all excited to see it. He's healthy now like I said he would be. We knew that was coming it just wasn't there as quick as we needed it to be for spring ball but we were never gonna have a record coming out of spring ball and so you guys were a lot more worried about that than I ever was, I've been trying to calm you guys down about that for a while. Yeah, he is full speed he's doing everything we are doing from an athletic standpoint; running conditioning cutting, all of that. So I think he's getting really confident in where his body is, which that was the first part. I think the hardest part when you come back from



injury is it takes a mental toll on you too right? These kids want to play and certainly, Conner doesn't want to sit out, he doesn't want to be unhealthy through spring. And I think all of that takes a toll on you. So him being healthy now able to get out there you are starting to see that energy starting to see him really come into himself. Obviously, it is going to be really important for us to get good quarterback play this fall.

DO YOU ANTICIPATE THERE BEING A COMPETITION THIS FALL WITH CONNER OR DO YOU PLAN ON HIM BEING THE STARTER ON DAY ONE OF FALL CAMP?

No, he's certainly the starter on day one of fall camp but there is competition at every position so I

don't think you ever want to have anything locked in at your program that's what we've told Taurean York we've told Trey Zuhn, we've told Shemar Turner you don't want a program where the best player doesn't play, so Conner's our guy, we have a lot of confidence in Conner so its gonna take a heck of a job for someone to beat him out. But if someone comes in and he's clearly elevated his play, you want to make sure you are playing the guys that give you the best chance to win.

WHEN THIS TEAM KICKS OFF AGAINST NOTRE DAME TO START THE SEASON WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO SEE AND WHAT THIS PROGRAM WILL EMBODY WHEN IT TAKES THE FIELD?

I want to see a program that represents Texas A&M the right way, with a lot of passion, a lot of energy a lot of physicality a lot of spirit, and goes out there and plays the game the way we are capable of. We all know if we can get this thing played like we are capable of we have a chance to be really successful.

TREY ZUHN III

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE HERE AT MEDIA DAYS REPRESENTING TEXAS A&M?

It's a huge honor to get to represent the 12th Man, my team, my coaches, and everyone associated with A&M. It's a huge honor.

COACH MENTIONED YOU HAVEN'T REALLY HAD AN OFF-SEASON WHERE YOU'VE BEEN HEALTHY THROUGH. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE BUMPS AND BRUISES EARLIER AND HOW HAVE YOU GROWN TO BE HEALTHY?

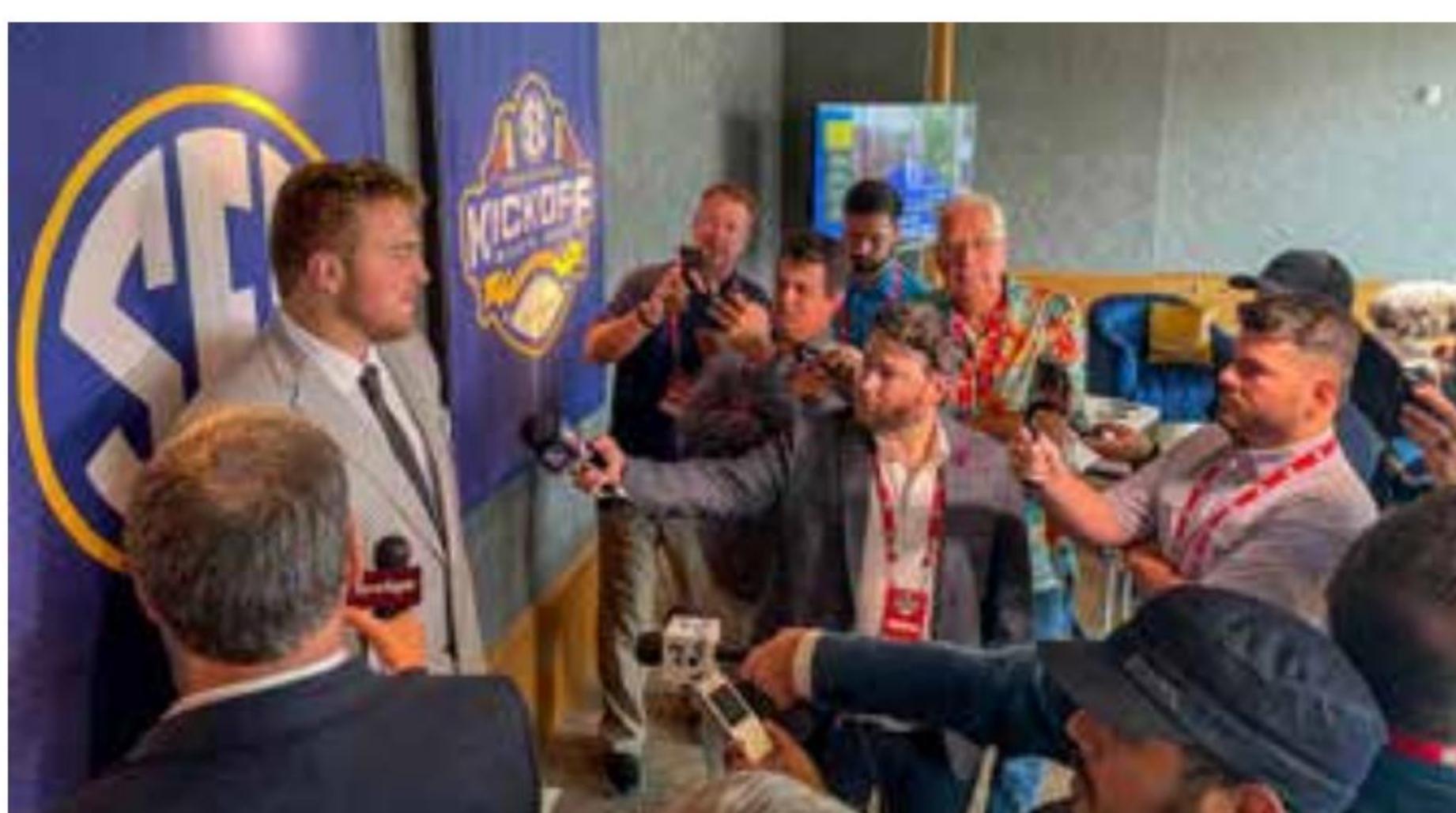
It's the best thing being healthy, being able to play healthy, workout healthy with nothing hurting, and easy to go 100% every single day. So I'm thankful for that.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT BUGGED YOU IN YEARS BEFORE?

I was coming off of a knee surgery and then got my labrum all fixed up.

YOUR HEALTH IS OBVIOUSLY GOING TO BE A REASON WHY THE OFFENSIVE LINE COULD BE BETTER WHAT ARE SOME OTHER REASONS WHY YOU THINK THE OFFENSIVE LINE MIGHT BE BETTER THAN IT WAS LAST YEAR?

We've got a lot of experience going into this year so I'm excited about that and we've had a lot of time to really jell together and get our connection strong between each other, so we are going to be fighting for each other and we know each other now so we will be able to play together a lot better.



Y'ALL HEAR THE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNs ABOUT THE OFFENSIVE LINE WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO Y'ALL AND HOW DO YOU REACT TO THAT?

It pisses us off and makes us work harder. We want to be the best offensive line to protect whoever is in the backfield and win games for the rest of the season.

A NEW COACH ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT A CHANGE IN CULTURE, HAS THERE BEEN A CHANGE AND DID YOU FEEL LIKE THERE NEEDED TO BE A CHANGE?

Right, I'd say for this season the accountability has really been a big change for us. For this whole past semester, we had many different programs to make sure players were held accountable and people were where they needed to be and did what they needed to do.

WHAT'S A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF HOW Y'ALL WERE HELD ACCOUNTABLE?

We had a system where we were grouped into teams and if you were to miss a meal or just anything there would be a ding for your team and if you had the most amount of dings at the end of your week you had an extra workout kind of a punishment workout. So that was a way to get people motivated to hold each other accountable and hold themselves accountable.

WAS IT AN ADJUSTMENT FOR SOME PEOPLE JUST THAT LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY?

I'd say maybe it took one week and then everybody was like ok this is for real.

WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE EXTRA WORKOUT?

The worst part is the 500-yard plate pushes in the morning at 7 am.

DID YOU DO THEM IN THOSE SHOES?

I never had to do them! (laugh)



SHEMAR TURNER

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO REPRESENT A&M?

It's crazy man, it's a blessing. Truly a blessing to represent my team and my family. It feels great, feels like an honor.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME BACK AND PLAY FOR TEXAS A&M?

I decided to come back, one because I need to get my Aggie Ring and my degree, and two, to fix up some stuff on and off the field to better myself for the NFL when I get there.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE THINGS ON AND OFF THE FIELD THAT YOU WANTED TO FIX UP?

Really off the field, it's just accountability, holding myself accountable for all of my actions, doing what I need to do, right all the time. Coach Elko has helped with a lot of that coming in for accountability, he's helped us to make ourselves accountable the whole team accountable.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY?

So for an example, we have to check in at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That's a part of our accountability and if you don't check in you get points taken off and your team can get punished that week.

DID IT MAKE YOU BECOME A LEADER?

Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah. The way he got it set up there are leaders and some of the teams that speak up higher, are supposed to speak up higher, and push the team more. And there are also guys that aren't as high-level leaders on the team that you have to sit back and help to learn to follow, everybody has a role and everybody is holding everybody accountable.

WHAT KIND OF IMPRESSION HAS NIC SCOURTON MADE ON YOU?

Oh, my Lord! No, I aint gonna lie. Nic also loves the sport of football, like playing with the defensive lineman is good but playing with someone who is good and

actually loves the sport of football and works off the field all the extra work is amazing.

IS HE AS GOOD AS YOU?

Ahhhhhhhhh (laughs) Ah Nic is great I aint gonna lie, Nic did right.

YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH YOUR HEAD COACH COMING IN A NEW HEAD COACH BUT HE'S BEEN AROUND THE PROGRAM AND YOU'VE SPECIFICALLY BEEN COACHED BY HIM, HOW MUCH DOES THAT HELP HAVING ELKO BACK?

That helps a lot a lot a lot! Having a defensive-minded head coach and having as good of a head coach as him coming in, helping us. Yeah, we are going to be able to finish a lot more games with him. He came in and fixed all of the left corners we had that were loose, he came and tightened up all the screws.

WHAT HAVE COACH SPENCER AND COACH BATEMAN BROUGHT SO FAR?

Coach Spence and Coach Batemen have brought straight energy, I'm not gonna lie. Especially Spence, and Coach Chaos, they are a bottle of energy man, I love them both to death. They bring a lot of energy and a lot of go get it to the defense.

TAUREAN YORK

YOU ARE A UNIQUE CASE BEING A SOPHOMORE AT MEDIA DAYS. WHAT KIND OF HONOR IS THAT FOR YOU PERSONALLY?

Oh, it's a major honor, being my age and I knowing just got here, but I appreciate my coaches and my teammates for allowing me to lead them.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO BUY INTO WHAT COACH ELKO WANTED FROM YOU?

Since I was in high school I was always committed to Coach Elko, everything he always said was really thorough, he meant what he said and everything he said he was going to do he did. He's a man of his word and I respect that.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE EVERYBODY ELSE TO?

I'd probably say two months. He runs a tight ship, he doesn't allow any loose ends. He wants you to be where you're supposed to be on time. Whenever you have that kind of instruction and discipline it's easy to buy in.

HOW MUCH OF AN ADJUSTMENT WAS IT FOR SOME PLAYERS FOR HIS RIGID STYLE?

It's definitely an adjustment because when you are used to doing your own thing it's hard to get out of your own way sometimes, even when you have great guidance and you have people that have won national

championships in Coach Moffitt leading the way, it's easy to follow.

HOW DO THE PUNISHMENTS AND ALL THE RULES SET THE TONE?

It sets the tone because you know he aint playing around, like I said he means what he says. Whether it's discipline or being on time.

WE HEARD ABOUT THE PUNISHMENTS WERE THERE ANY REWARDS FOR THE TEAM THAT WON?

Of course, that's one of the first things that he said when he got here winners get good stuff and losers... he hit on that all the time. So whether you win in competitive abilities or not. The winners got a lot of good gear and my team did not win.

HAVING A DEFENSIVE-MINDED HEAD COACH AND UNDER ELKO'S LEADERSHIP AND YOUR LEADERSHIP IS THERE EVER ANY TALK ABOUT THIS TEAM BEING ABLE TO BRING BACK THE WRECKING CREW THAT OLD AGS LIKE ME REMEMBER?

We have the Wrecking Crew mentioned a lot, I'm just happy to have a defensive-minded head coach and be coached by the head coach about defensive plays, me and him talk a lot during walkthrough so I'm happy to have Coach Elko as our head coach. ■



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A photograph of a man in a blue long-sleeved shirt working on the engine of a dark-colored car. He is focused on his task, using a tool. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting.

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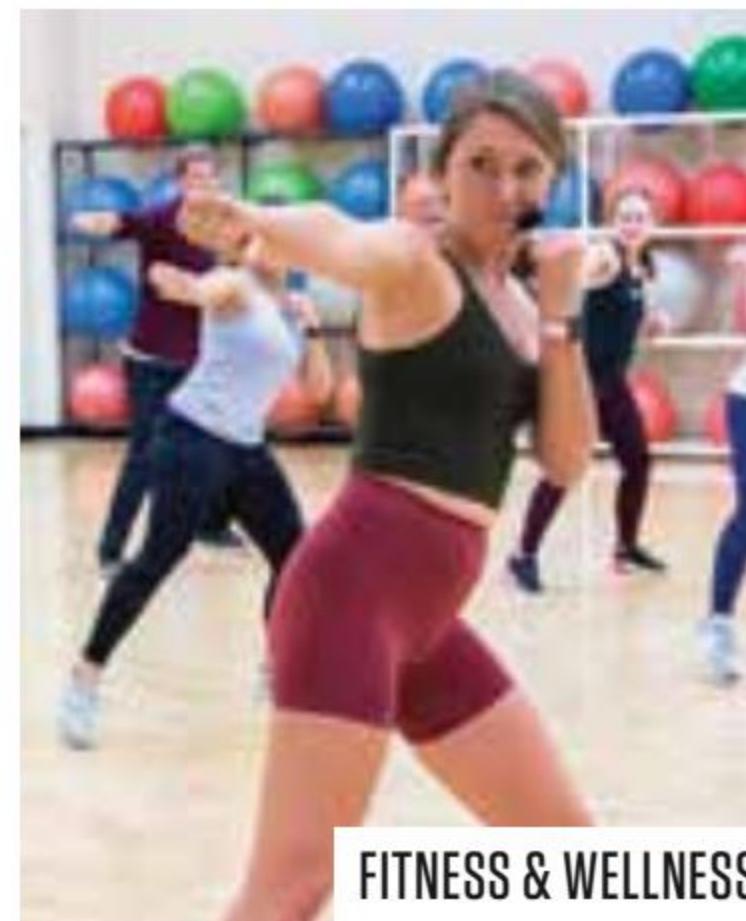
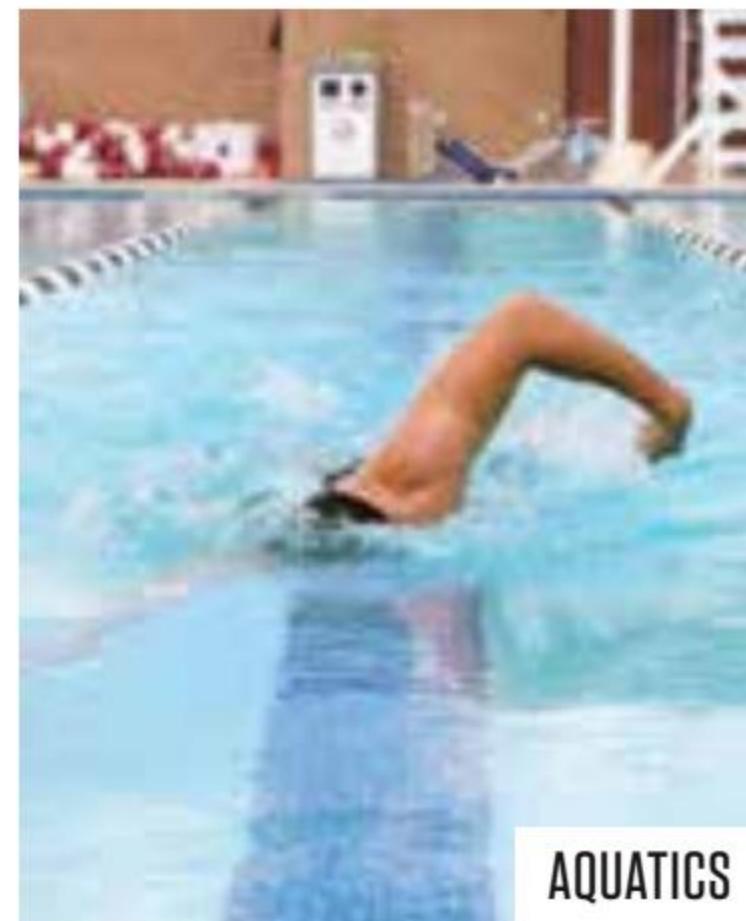


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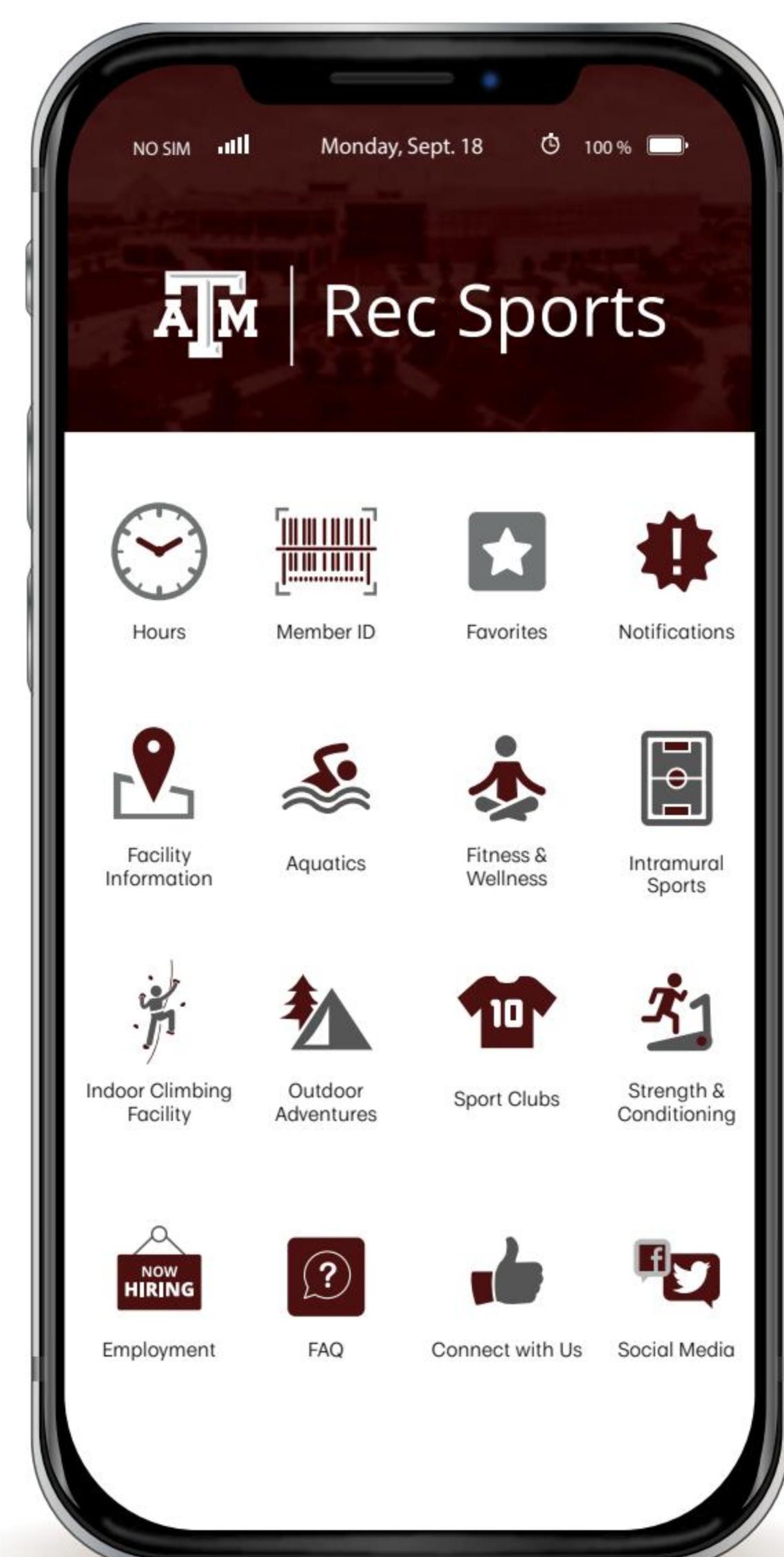
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WAKEBOARDING CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

As we wrap up the summer and prepare for the fall, it is a perfect time to introduce our readers to the Wakeboarding Club at Texas A&M. Wakeboarding is a combination of water skiing, surfing, and snowboarding and is one of the most fun and adrenaline-inducing sports you can ever try out! Depending on your experience you can be "carving up a watery storm and popping ollies after just a few tries."

According to club president Ellie Patrick, "The club began in 2002, became officially recognized by Texas A&M as an organization in 2004, accepted as an official Sport Club within Rec Sports in 2011 and won its first National Championship in 2015. We are the official competitive team representing Texas A&M around the nation in all things WAKE."

In fact, for the last 12 years, the club has hosted their own competition here

in Aggieland named Wake Up, where up to eleven teams come to compete. There are currently 80 members on the team varying in experience and ability. Patrick says "Previous experience is great but we are truly looking for people with a positive attitude who are eager to learn!"

Patrick grew up in competitive wakeboarding but she told us collegiate teams offer a whole new experience in the sport. She said "As soon as I got to A&M I applied and it has been my favorite part of college! This team has become a second family & has helped me grow both on and off the water. Getting to be president has been the best experience and I am so grateful!"

We asked Patrick why people join the club and she told us "We have members join for tons of reasons! Most commonly they have been interested in water sports without the opportunity to try growing

up or have a water sports background and want to pursue it further in a team environment."

Members can sign up for at least one practice set a week. If the sets don't fill up they can sign up for more. The schedules are adjustable to fit member's schedules.

Although it's not the most well-known sport Patrick said "Anyone can be a great wakeboarder! Improving is all about being tough & driven to try new things!"



CREW CLUBS

BY ROB HAVENS '88

With the eyes of the world focused on Paris, France we thought we would highlight an Olympic event that a lot of people may not know much about, rowing. The sport of racing boats in single sculls or shells that hold eight rowers and a coxswain called eights is also known as crew. A unique sport that requires its participants to have strength, endurance, and the ability to work as a team to accomplish a goal.

The Crew Club at Texas A&M was established in 2001 by Greg Wood, who acquired the financial support he needed from the University and then went cross country with some other founding members to purchase the team's first boat, an old wooden Popcock.

It didn't take long for the team to succeed as they won the Mixed 8 gold in their debut competition in Austin called the Head of the Colorado regatta. Over the years the club has continued to grow and this year's squad has 50 members of approximately 60% men and 40% women.

In the fall the team competes in the

head race season. These races are around 5,000 meters and focus on endurance as boats are released one at a time and are timed on the course.

In the spring the team competes in sprints, where a group of boats all begin at the starting line and race between 1,000 and 2,000 meters to the finish line.

The team holds 11 practices at Lake Bryan during the week and aims for each member to attend three to four practices. Most members join with little to no experience.

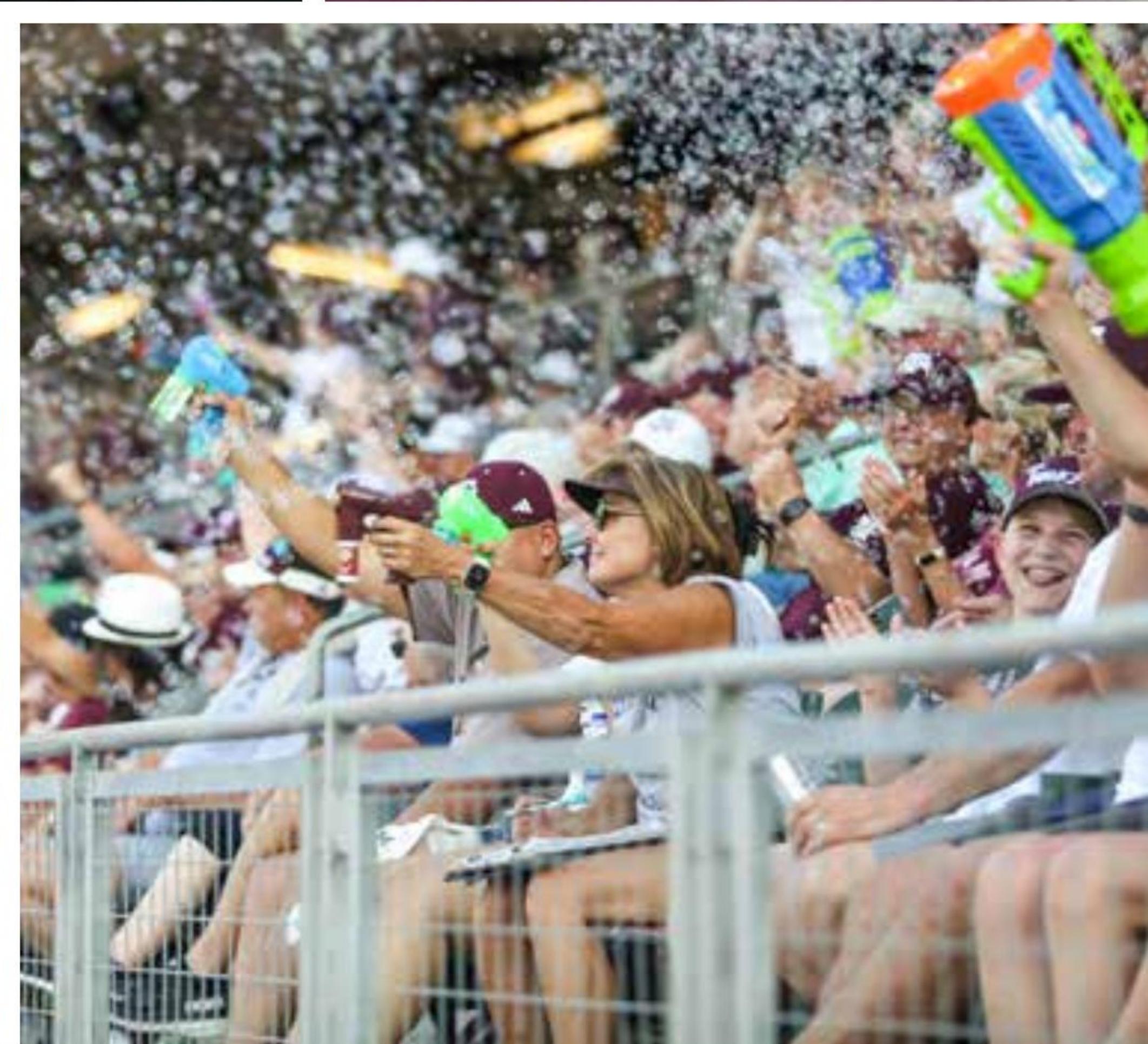
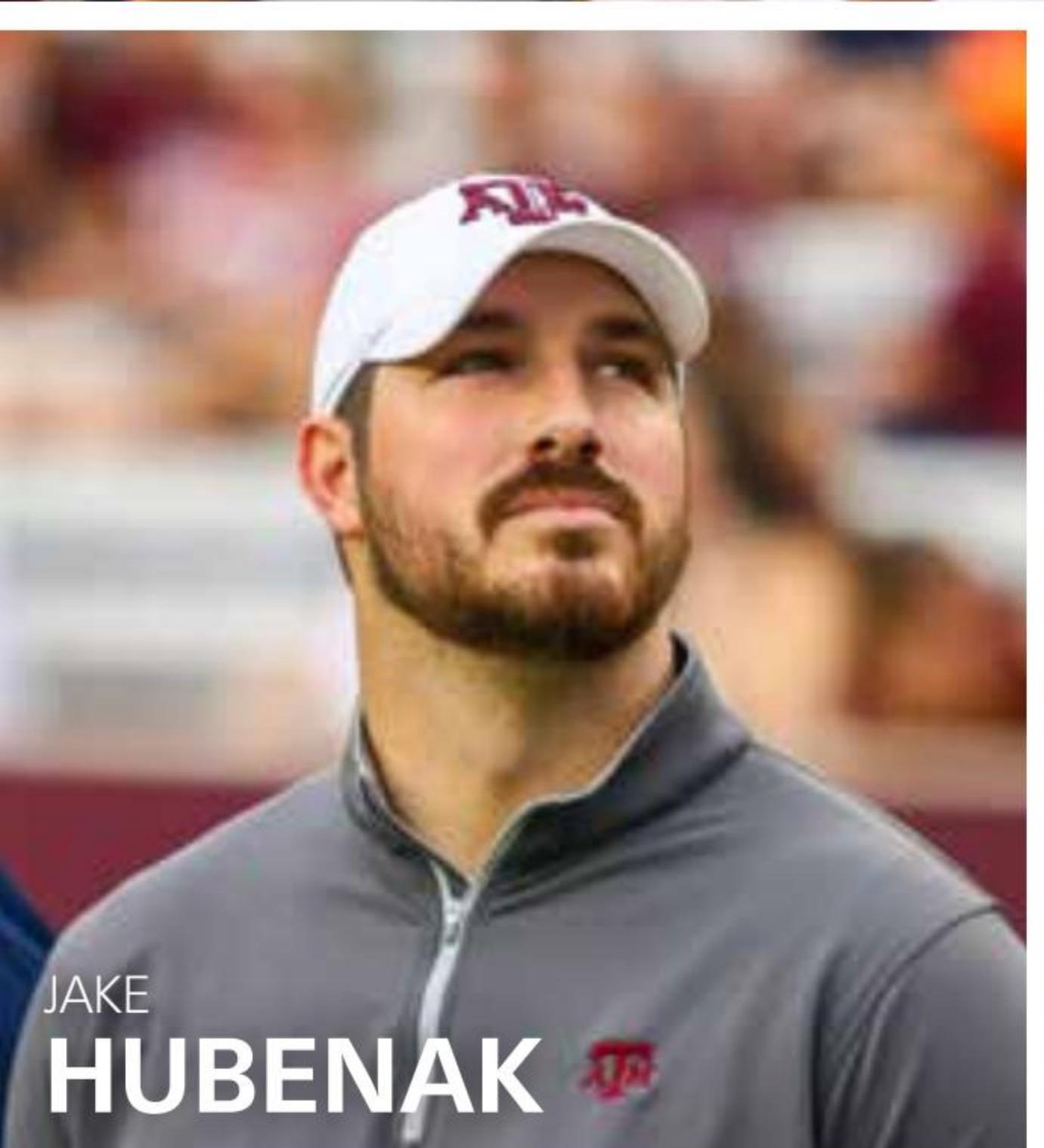
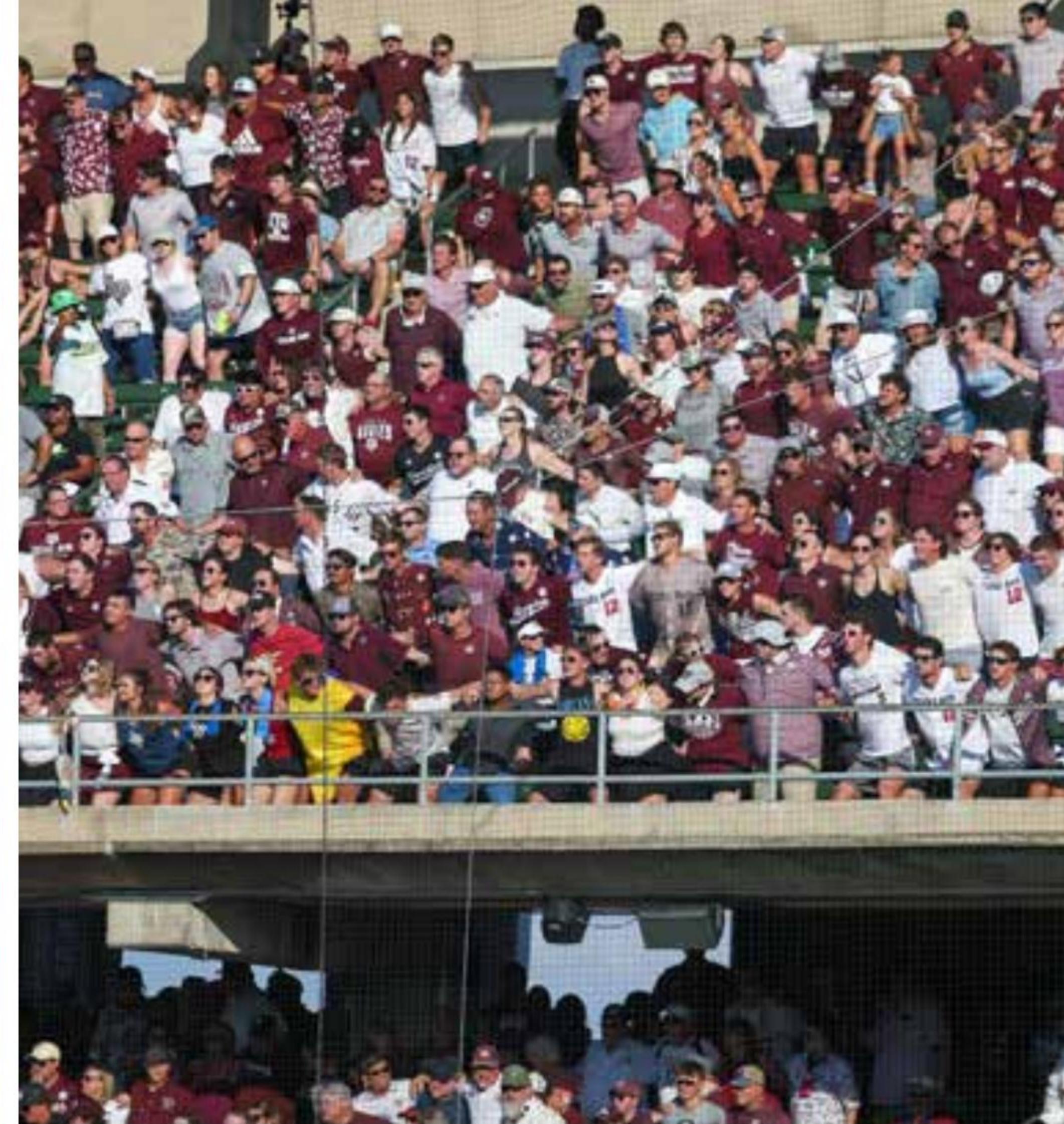
We asked President Emily Zimmerman why she joined the team and she said "I attended a Texas A&M Crew informational meeting at the beginning of my first fall semester. I immediately knew that this club was where I belonged. I applied that semester, and I would argue that was the best decision of my college career. I am so grateful to be surrounded by a group of people who work hard and push one another to succeed both on and off the water!"

We asked Zimmerman what her favorite

thing about being a member of the club and she told us "My favorite part about rowing in general is the team aspect of it. I love how each rower plays a vital role in the boat and everyone has to work together to have a successful row."

This fall the Aggies will face Texas, Baylor, and TCU. They are always looking for new members, so we asked Zimmerman what makes a great crew member, "Someone who is hardworking and never shies away from a challenge" She continued, "The athlete shows up every day, ready to work and push themselves. They are a team player and row hard for themselves and the other rowers in the boat." If that sounds like you, it's time to check out Aggie Crew!

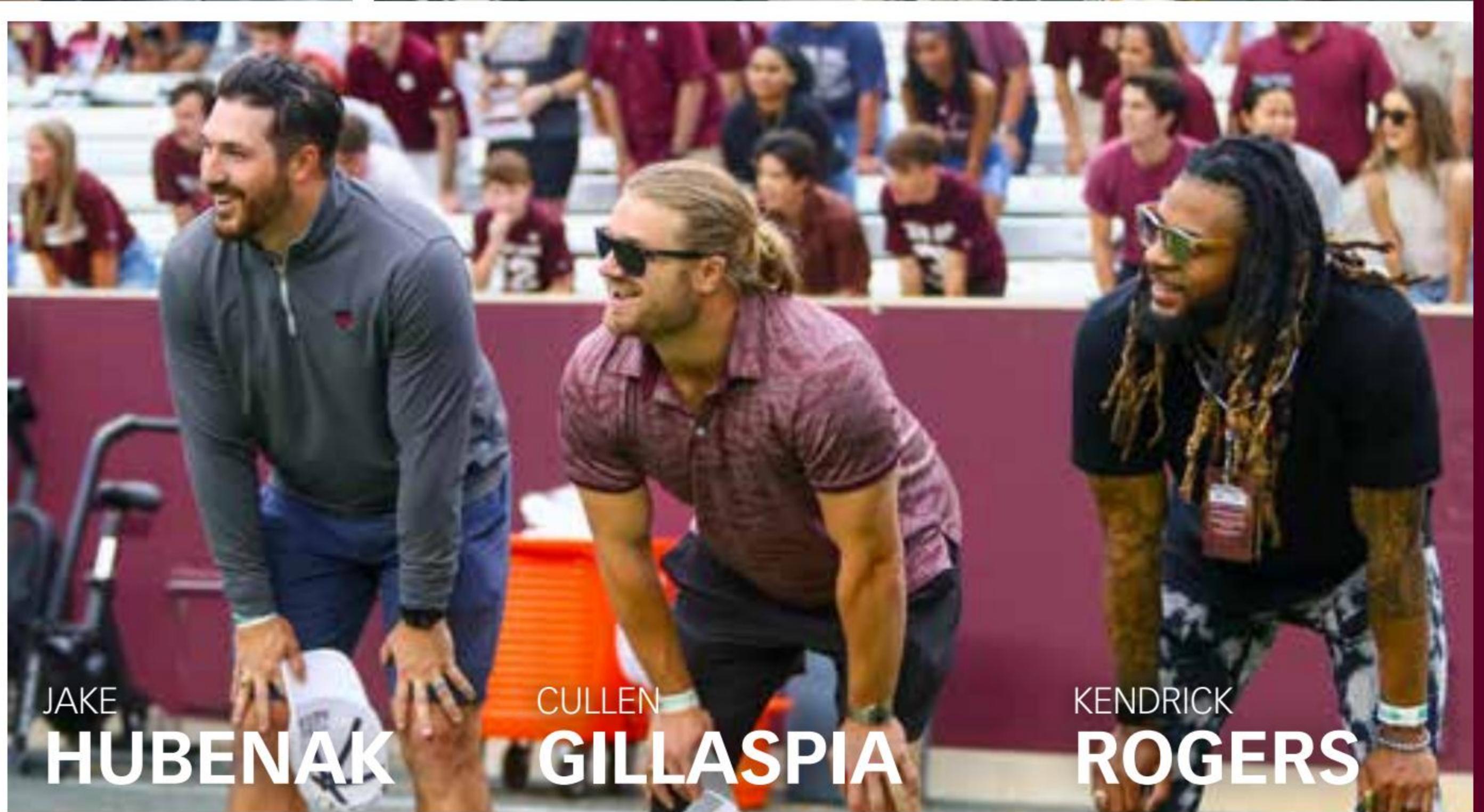




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